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Note verbale dated 23 July 2014 from the Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the General Assembly and has the honour to state that Portugal has decided to submit its candidature for membership in the Human Rights Council, for the term 2015-2017, at the elections to be held in New York during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The decision stems from the long-standing commitment of Portugal to respect and promote human rights for all. This principle is enshrined in the Portuguese Constitution and is a key priority of the Government, at home and abroad.

At the national level, Portugal continuously strives to do more and better. In this regard, the establishment of the Portuguese National Human Rights Committee in 2010 was a milestone. At the international level, Portugal is now party, without reservations, to eight core United Nations human rights treaties and all their optional protocols, and thereby recognizes the full range of competences of the respective committees.

By submitting its candidature, Portugal demonstrates its willingness to contribute further to the protection and promotion of the universality, indivisibility, inalienability and interdependence of all human rights.

The Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations has the honour to transmit herewith information regarding the contribution made by Portugal to the promotion and protection of human rights and its voluntary pledges and commitments, prepared in conformity with General Assembly resolution 60/251 (see annex). The Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated to all Permanent Missions to the United Nations.

* A/69/150.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 23 July 2014 from the Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Portugal to the Human Rights Council, 2015-2017

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

Permanent commitment of Portugal to human rights

Portugal is strongly committed to promoting and respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. This principle is enshrined in its Constitution and is a key priority of its Government, both at home and abroad.

Portugal firmly upholds the values and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. Accordingly, the defence of effective multilateralism and the primacy of the United Nations in international affairs is a pillar of Portuguese foreign policy.

The commitment of Portugal to human rights has guided its mandates as non-permanent member of the Security Council and its work in the Third Committee of the General Assembly, in the former Human Rights Commission and, since its creation in 2006, in the Human Rights Council.

Portugal fully supports a strong, independent and effective United Nations human rights system — one that contributes to improving the situation of human rights worldwide.

Portugal is party to eight core United Nations human rights treaties and all their optional protocols, which are directly applicable in the internal legal system after publication in the Portuguese official journal, *Diário da República*.

Portugal has signed and ratified, without reservations:

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its optional protocols
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its optional protocol
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its optional protocol
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its optional protocol
- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its optional protocol
- The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

Portugal recognizes the full range of competences of the United Nations human rights treaty bodies, in all their scope, including the power to examine individual complaints, complaints between States and the power to carry out processes of inquiry.

Portugal is also party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and recognizes its jurisdiction as compulsory.

At the regional level, Portugal actively supports and participates in the work of the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in the field of human rights.

In the Council of Europe, Portugal is party to the European Convention on Human Rights and most of its protocols. Portugal recognizes the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights. It is also party to the majority of the conventions on human rights of the Council of Europe and recognizes the competence of the committees established by those conventions.

The Portuguese Ombudsman is the national human rights institution, accredited with "A" status in accordance with the United Nations Paris Principles. It is a well-established independent institution, constitutionally and legally mandated to defend and promote citizens' rights and fundamental freedoms.

At the international level, Portugal is committed to promoting the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions.

In line with its long-standing commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights and its support for the role played by the United Nations, if elected to the Human Rights Council, Portugal pledges:

(a) To participate fully in the work of the Human Rights Council by:

(i) Promoting and protecting the universality, indivisibility, inalienability and interdependence of all human rights, be they civil, cultural, economic, social or political;

(ii) Establishing an open dialogue and constructive cooperation with all States, both members and non-members of the Council, thereby improving the quality of the debates;

(iii) Advocating a horizontal and inclusive approach to human rights issues in all the spheres of action of the United Nations and working for the improvement of the coordination and the efficiency of the United Nations human rights instruments;

(iv) Continuing to present its national initiatives on economic, social and cultural rights and on the right to education;

(v) Maintaining its standing invitation to the special rapporteurs and to all other special procedures mandate holders to visit Portugal;

(vi) Actively participating and supporting the universal periodic review as a key cooperative mechanism aimed at improving respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms worldwide;

(vii) Supporting the participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Council as a positive and important contribution to strengthening the dialogue between States and civil society;

(viii) Supporting the participation of national human rights institutions in the work of the Council;

(b) To support the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the treaty bodies and the special procedures mandate holders by upholding their independence and efficiency, which are essential for ensuring the implementation by States of their human rights obligations;

(c) To promote and protect human rights at the international level by:

(i) Encouraging all States to become party to the main international human rights instruments and to fully implement their obligations in this field;

(ii) Widely disseminating information regarding human rights obligations, thereby contributing to a greater respect and implementation of these obligations and to ensuring an appropriate response by the international community to human rights violations;

(iii) Promoting the abolition of the death penalty in all countries;

(iv) Promoting the elimination of all forms of discrimination, whether based on ancestry, gender, race, language, territory of origin, religion, political or ideological belief, education, economic situation, social status or sexual orientation;

(v) Promoting and protecting the rights of the child, always giving full priority to the child's best interest;

(vi) Promoting and protecting the rights of those most vulnerable in our societies;

(vii) Promoting respect for economic, social and cultural rights, including through the promotion of the universal ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;

(viii) Contributing, through our bilateral development aid and through the United Nations system, to strengthening democracy, good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(ix) Promoting the inclusion of a human rights perspective in the post-2015 development agenda;

(x) Encouraging the setting up of national human rights institutions in accordance with the United Nations Paris Principles, as well as encouraging cooperation between these institutions and their respective authorities;

(d) To promote and protect human rights at the national level by:

(i) Reinforcing recognition by Portugal of the complaints procedures and the individual and inter-State inquiries set up by the human rights treaties;

(ii) Continuing to cooperate fully with the treaty bodies, implementing their recommendations and respecting reporting obligations in a timely manner;

(iii) Implementing those recommendations arising from the universal periodic reviews accepted by Portugal;

(iv) Continuing to make full use of the Portuguese National Human Rights Committee, an interministerial body set up in 2010 responsible for intergovernmental coordination with the aim of promoting an integrated approach to human rights policies;

(v) Promoting the adoption of legislation, programmes and policies that have an impact on human rights;

(vi) Reinforcing further cooperation with civil society;

(vii) Strengthening the protection and promotion of the rights of women and ensuring that a gender perspective is included in all policies and programmes adopted at the national level;

(viii) Improving the protection and promotion of the rights of the child and ensuring that a solid perspective on the promotion of the rights of the child is included in all relevant policies and programmes adopted at the national level;

(ix) Continuing to implement the international obligations and national legislation of Portugal, as well as best practices and internationally agreed guidelines, to fight racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and all related forms of intolerance;

(x) Fully implementing its comprehensive human rights policy instruments, including, its national plan against domestic and gender-based violence, its equality plan, its national plan against trafficking in human beings, its programme of action for the elimination of female genital mutilation, its national action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) (2009-2014) and its national strategy for the integration of Roma communities;

(xi) Developing national human rights indicators to effectively monitor and assess the implementation by Portugal of its obligations;

(xii) Remaining mindful that an enhanced role abroad comes with a greater responsibility at home to promote and protect human rights for all.